

SECRET-EYES ONLY

12 August 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Morning Meeting of 12 August 1968

X1  
X1  
[REDACTED]

25X

[REDACTED]

25X

Lehman drew attention to MACV's weekly wrap-up, which suggests that most of the enemy main force units are in positions to launch military action.

The Director was highly complimentary of the material contained in the briefing book provided for his session at the ranch on Saturday.

D/ONE advised that the Estimate on Soviet emplacement of weapons of mass destruction on the sea bed is scheduled for this week's USIB meeting.

Bross discussed Friday's PFIAB session.

DD/S&T reported that there was an SR-71 flight over North Vietnam [REDACTED]

X1

ADD/P drew attention to indications that the Communists may be planning an attack against Nakhon Phanom airbase in Thailand.

DDCI suggested and the Director concurred that USIB be briefed Thursday on the study of enemy forewarning of air attacks.

DDCI drew attention to the planned study group on [REDACTED] and indicated a scenario whereby the NIRB will make an input to the study group provided the study group's report is reviewed by the Director before submission to the Secretary of Defense. The Director concurred in this arrangement.

25X

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The Director drew attention to the recent series of articles by George Wilson in the Washington Post and asked the DD/I and the DD/S&T to look into the articles to determine the source of Wilson's information.



L. K. White

25X

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## MIRV Tests Hold 'Brink' Meaning

By George C. Wilson

Washington Post Staff Writer

THE UNITED STATES this week shows off a new weapon which will have an incalculable effect on the world's arms race.

It could damp it down—and thus fulfill President Johnson's hopes—or escalate it and thus confirm the fears of many scientists.

The weapon is called MIRV, an acronym for multiple-independently-targetable-re-entry vehicle. It is several nuclear genies in one bottle in the form of several H-bombs atop one missile.

The deadly package of H-bombs is slated to be carried by the Minuteman 3 ICBM and the Poseidon missile. The Minuteman 3 will be put in underground silos while the Poseidon will replace the Polaris missile on our nuclear submarines.

MIRV, if deployed, would mean many times more nuclear warheads in the world. Each Minuteman 3 would have three H-bombs in its nose and each Poseidon as many as ten. Russian missiles, because they are more powerful than ours, could carry even more MIRVs. The United States believes it is well ahead of the Soviet Union in MIRV development.

THE PENTAGON contends MIRV makes an effective antiballistic-missile defense impossible. The package of warheads would break apart on the way to the target city so the defense would have too many incoming H-bombs to handle.

The deadly shower of H-bombs would use up the city's antimissile-missiles. Then a second wave of nuclear-tipped missiles could fly into the city unimpeded. Or targeting officers could decide to get more bang for the buck by sending each of the MIRVs aboard one missile to a different city.

The United States and the Soviet Union have been responding to each other's weapon advances. So Russia—although off to a late start—will probably go to MIRV unless the United States calls off its development.

The public flight test of Minuteman 3 and Poseidon—slated for Thursday and Friday at Cape Kennedy with the usual possibility of a delay—will focus world attention on MIRV. President Johnson, it will be obvious, indeed has a blue chip which could be played at arms talks with the Soviet.

The United States could call off the development of MIRV in exchange for a corresponding move in Soviet offensive or defensive missiles. Such a tradeoff would mean MIRV had made a real contribution to "stabilizing" the arms relationship between the two superpowers.

Since MIRV still must undergo two years of testing before it is ready for deployment, the President who follows Mr. Johnson also will have the option of scrapping MIRV to slow the arms race.

But what many scientists fear, including some on the President's Science Advisory Committee, is that MIRV will be "destabilizing." Once MIRV completed those tests the Soviets know must precede deployment, the old uncertainty which has spawned billions of dollars of useless weapons would move in.

Soviet observation satellites photograph our ICBMs all the time. But—once MIRV tests were finished—how could the Soviets tell whether the warhead on our ICBMs were MIRV or just one H-bomb? The temptation, in this situation, would be for the Soviets to deploy more nuclear weapons as a hedge.

WITHOUT MIRV, U.S. and Soviet Union reconnaissance satellites could police a missile freeze agreement. On-site inspection at last could be removed as the stumbling block to arms-control agreements with the Soviets.

But MIRV, if deployed, would put that stumbling block right where it was. Hawks in the United States and Soviet Union would argue that they could not safely rely on satellites and other mechanical means to police an arms agreement.

Still another fear some scientists have about MIRV—one voiced by Nobel prize-winning physicist Hans Bethe—is that the weapon will bring back the nervous days of "counter-force" and "first strike."

Counter-force is the strategy of knocking out the other nation's weapons before they can be fired against you. Both the United States and the Soviet Union have deployed their nuclear weapons so that enough of them would survive a surprise strike to assure destruction of the aggressor.

But MIRV, if it became accurate enough through new guidance techniques, could ruin this deterrence which has kept the world out of nuclear war. A nation with MIRV might figure it could knock out the enemy's offense completely in a first strike. A nation without MIRV might figure, in time of crisis, that this indeed might happen. That nation therefore would be tempted to fire first.

All this makes this week's tests at the Cape a significant new chapter in nuclear brinkmanship.

## Russians Slow Work On Anti-Missile Sites

By George C. Wilson  
Washington Post Staff Writer

U.S. satellite pictures indicate the Soviet Union is conducting reappraisal of its bomber and missile defenses.

The photographic evidence shows that the Soviets have slowed, if not called off, the construction of an anti-missile defense around Moscow.

The satellite pictures also have satisfied U.S. intelligence officials that the Tallinn defense across the northeast approaches to Russia is against American bombers, not missiles.

But even this Tallinn defense, U.S. specialists believe, is now being challenged in Russia as hardly worth it, based on the experience of similar Soviet anti-aircraft equipment in North Vietnam.

"What you have to realize," said one American specialist, "is that knocking down 20 per cent of attacking aircraft is success in conventional war but sheer disaster in nuclear war."

United States fighter-bombers have been getting through Soviet anti-aircraft defenses in North Vietnam to an extent that would be disastrous to the Soviet Union in a nuclear war.

The Soviet Union has provided the North Vietnamese with the SA-2 anti-aircraft missile, the one which knocked down Gary Powers's U-2 over Russia. While the Soviets have developed an SA-3 which is better, it is far from 100 per cent effective.

The Soviet air defense is against American B-52s and B-58s which would fly in low with nuclear bombs. There are signs the Soviets now share the U.S. Air Force's confidence that a large number of

those bombers would get through the defense.

"The question now before Soviet strategists," said an American specialist, "is where do we go from here?"

Historically, the Soviet Union has spent more money on defensive weapons than on offensive ones. The ratio is about 3 to 1 compared to 1 to 1 for the U.S., according to those who made a long-term study of the subject.

It would, therefore, be quite a wrench for the Soviets to change this long-time emphasis to the offense. But the proven penetration ability of airplanes and the projected penetration of modern missiles may be pushing them into it.

If that is true, the Soviet Union may be more willing today than at any time in the past to sign an agreement with the U.S. to freeze defensive missile deployment.